

HOTEP

Issue 25: December 2017

*Wishing all our readers a very
Happy Christmas and all the best
for the New Year.*

Review of the November meeting

We were pleased to welcome back **Peter Phillips**, Editor of *Ancient Egypt Magazine*, who gave us a talk entitled '**But where did they live?**'. In this he provided a comprehensive survey of settlement sites in Egypt from the famous workmen's villages of Deir el-Medina (below) and Amarna to lesser-known sites of the earliest periods right



through to the Graeco-Roman era. He explained how such sites are comparatively rare because the locations chosen for human occupation in the past tended to continue in use for hundreds, if not thousands, of years, often leading to the creation of tells, or occupation mounds, which cannot be thoroughly investigated because they are still surmounted by modern villages. The changing course of the Nile and the importance of agricultural land meant that settlements were most often found on the desert edge or on higher ground avoiding the annual inundation. Peter used plans from excavations and contemporary images to show the style of architecture and the basic layouts adopted by the Egyptians for their earthly dwellings. He discussed some of the theories about whether houses were multi-storeyed and how clerestory windows and 'wind towers' were



The newsletter of The Southampton Ancient Egypt Society

used to keep inner rooms aired. He also spoke about the known examples of royal residences such as the small palaces at Medinet Habu and the Ramesseum. This talk was packed full of detail supported by well-chosen images and gave us a fascinating insight into a less well-known topic.

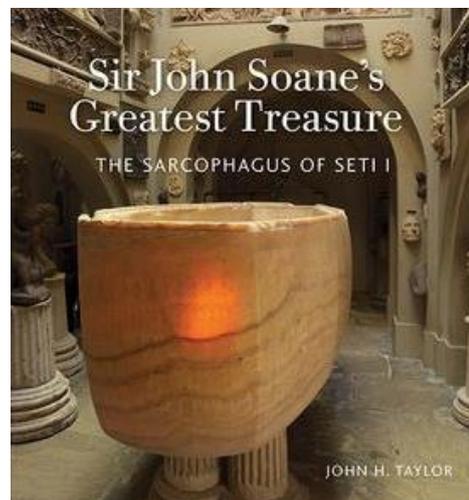
November Quiz Answers

The **alabaster** or **calcite** sarcophagus belonged to **Seti I** and can now be seen in the **Sir John Soane Museum**, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, where it is the the Museum's most treasured possession and central feature of the current exhibition:

Egypt Uncovered: Belzoni and the Tomb of Pharaoh Seti I

Planned to 'coincide with the 200th anniversary of the discovery of the tomb of Pharaoh Seti I by the Egyptologist Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778–1823)', this exhibition runs until 15 Apr 2018. To find out more visit the museum's website:

<https://www.soane.org/>



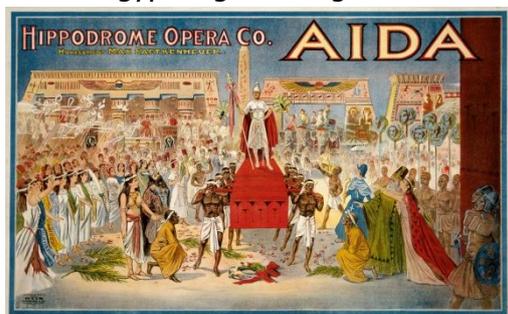
The Legacy of Ancient Egypt

by Charles Freeman and John D Ray

A library book review by **Susanne Cooke**

Even though it was last published in 2000, the book is full of facts and legends to intrigue.

Opera buffs will know that Aida was written for the opening of the Cairo Opera House, at the request of the Khedive Ismael (1863-79) who wanted to encourage modernising European forces but asked for the work to be antique and Egyptian in character. It tells the story of the love of an Egyptian general for an Ethiopian slave, and their undoing, thanks to the jealousy of the daughter of the (unnamed) king. The Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi was initially reluctant to take this on, until he learnt that the libretto was written by none other than the great French Egyptologist Auguste Mariette. So this



1908 poster for a US performance of 'Aida'

opera was actually conceived in Egypt by an Egyptologist. Mariette also designed the sets, which included a temple and palace in Memphis, the banks of the Nile, and the city gate of Thebes. Unfortunately sets and costumes were delayed in arriving due to the Franco-Prussian war in 1870-71, but the eventual premiere performance in Cairo was a great success, and fed the tradition of grand spectacles for film makers in the 20th century.

Christianity has long used Biblical references and drawn on Egyptian history – such as Akhenaten's monotheism, and the iconography of Mother and Child – to incorporate the ancient past into a vision of the world. It seems that Egyptian influences have also long pervaded Freemasonry. Their origins lay with the stonemasons who worked on medieval cathedrals, and shared a workshop – a 'lodge'. The masons took pride in their work especially revering geometry, the invention of which was traditionally attributed to Egypt because of its great buildings. In the 17th Century the lodge developed as a centre of ritual, with mysterious sacred rites offering reverence to ancient symbols – drawing on

the initiation rites of the goddess Isis as models. In Scotland our Calvinist Christianity was offset by even more popular Freemasonry and exotic ritual.

Cleopatra's Needle (R)

was presented to Britain in 1820 by the Egyptian viceroy Mehmet Ali, as a memorial to Admiral Nelson, who had saved Egypt from French domination, but it languished in Alexandria until 1877 through lack of interest in London. It was finally brought to England on a specially built barge, but went adrift off the coast of Spain, and was only recovered with difficulty.



The obelisk was one of a pair from Heliopolis which had been transported to Alexandria by the Roman Emperor Augustus. The other was presented by the Khedive Ismael to the United States in 1869 and is now in Central Park, New York.

Thomas Cook & Son, the oldest tour operator in the world, led the first guided tour to Egypt in 1869 and had a virtual monopoly on Western tourism in Egypt, creating many jobs for locals with their hotels and shipyards, founding and funding a hospital in Luxor, helping with the battle against tomb-looting, and protecting Nile wildlife by banning the shooting of game from the decks of their ships. A fleet of ships provided the comforts of home for tourists who would otherwise have found the experience of travelling (such as Egyptian plumbing) intolerable – the list of distinguished participants included Amelia Edwards, founder of the Egyptian Exploration Fund, American president Ulysses S Grant, and Lord Randolph Churchill (Winston's father).

Gauguin's painting *Ta Matete (The Market)*

was directly influenced by an exhibition of tomb painting in the British Museum – and looks remarkably Egyptian. The BM can also thank the rumours of the **Tutankhamun curse**, which spread after Lord Carnarvon's death shortly after the tomb's discovery in 1922, for a flood of anonymous gifts from treasure-seeking travellers to Egypt now anxious to get rid of possibly "cursed" artefacts.



Next Meeting 20 January 2018:



Hilary Wilson, will give a talk entitled **'Three into Two Will Go'**, dealing with some of the principles and conventions of two-dimensional art in ancient Egypt. This talk will cover aspects such as the representation of the human figure and the various non-perspective methods used to convey the idea of depth on a flat surface, either in painting or relief.

Advance Notice

The next **Informal Evening Meeting** will be on **Friday 23 March**

and a **five-week evening class** will run on **Fridays from 27 April to 25 May.**

If you have any suggestions as to topics for the evening class or if you think you could offer a talk or activity for an Informal Evening, please let us know.



And Finally - Quiz Time

All these questions involve **stars**

1: What name is given to this lapwing with human arms raised over the star hieroglyph?



2: The canopic jar (below) is labelled with the name of a Son of Horus which contains the star hieroglyph. What animal should appear on its lid?



3: What is the name of this goddess (R) with an 8-pointed star as part of her crown?



4: Where is this example (below) of a starry sky?



Answers in the next edition of Hotep

